



Moses Brown School

FOR THE HONOR OF TRUTH

Dear families of Moses Brown students,

As we continue to follow the path of COVID-19, we wanted to share with you all a briefing about our plans in the event of a school closure. Above all, the health of our community and our commitment to learning guide our discussions as we actively respond to the recommendations of local and world health organizations. While we hope not to have to use this plan, we recognize that sharing an outline of our intended response, should a closure occur, may help you to plan ahead. Our plan attempts to balance the desire to provide ongoing education with the understanding that family circumstances differ widely, and we hope that you'll be in touch with questions and concerns so that we may be helpful in negotiating this unprecedented possibility.

Division heads will add further instructions for families in the event that a cancellation occurs. You will note, in the attached document, that the first two days of any campus closure will be workdays for teachers as they prepare to offer lessons remotely. This also allows you an opportunity to make your own plans for an extended absence of students. After that, teachers will communicate with students as appropriate. We ask that you—as well as middle school and upper school students—check your email daily for updates in the event of a closure so that we can remain in close communication. Access to electronic communication will be important, so if this is difficult in some way, please let me or the appropriate division head know.

In learning more about how best to “deliver school” in the event of a closure, we tried to think about the ways that this opens up opportunities as well. Asynchronous learning—materials that students can access on their own time, at their own pace—allows individual students time to let ideas develop, to compose responses and synthesize thinking, and to express themselves in new ways (for example. video responses). It avoids asking students to spend hours staring at a screen, and increases student agency in giving them some ownership over the ways in which they approach their work. We hope that students discover more about how they learn through the experience of learning in new ways—just as their teachers will teach in new and novel ways during any potential closure.

And just as your families are considering how they will best negotiate the days during a cancellation, so are the families of teachers and advisors. As we all manage this potentiality together, I'm reminded of the opportunity to practice grace with those who may have additional challenges. Certainly now, more than ever, we're all in this together.

Maintaining a sense of community as we separate during a possible closure is a challenge, and we assure you that we'll communicate regularly in partnering with you and supporting our sense of community all as we move through any cancellation.

With thanks for your patience and partnership,
Debbie Phipps
Assistant Head of School for Academics



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Moses Brown Distance Learning philosophy

At Moses Brown, we prize the relationships between teacher and students as central to the learning experience. While we recognize that distance learning makes this challenging, we endeavor to employ alternative approaches to offering continued instruction through technology in order to preserve both learning and relationships, as much as possible. Teachers will make use of various programs and platforms—many already used in the classroom—to share assignments and lessons with students. While this is no substitute for classroom learning, teachers will continue to help students engage in learning and move ahead with relevant material.

Suggested guidelines for parents and guardians

- Each family will approach a school cancellation differently, and we offer these ideas as suggestions for supporting distance learning.
- Help your child establish a schedule for addressing assignments. Students may feel that these are “free days,” and helping them determine how best to plan their days—including breaks—will ensure that they keep up with the assigned work. Check in with them about their plans, and please contact appropriate teacher(s) and/or advisor if you or your child encounter difficulties in addressing the material. It is easy for students to view a cancellation as “time off,” so they may need help in making a plan.
- Ensure that your child has access to supplies for learning. For many students, this means access to a computer or tablet, as well as an internet connection. In families with multiple children of school age, this means sharing materials, and may require your intervention in how best to do so.
- Communicate with the school. Teachers, division heads, advisors, and Debbie stand by, ready to support students’ work. Please keep in mind that they are also negotiating their own family challenges, so responses may not be immediate; we ask that you allow a reasonable time for a response to questions, and that you keep email focused but complete.
- Maintain a sense of school community. Coming to school each day is about more than learning, and one challenge in a school cancellation is the potential loss of a sense of community. Help your children consider how best to maintain contact with friends. They can form study groups (they’re good at this!), as well as check in with others through virtual means.
- Encourage healthy habits to limit stress. Good sleep habits, healthy eating, getting exercise, staying hydrated—as well as the guidelines specific to COVID-19 avoidance (washing hands, avoiding touching one’s face)—are all important during this time. If your child is feeling sick, treat this as you would a sick day at school; taking time off to recover is important, and we can help in determining a plan to “catch up” when the student is feeling better.

On-line School: Plans for school closure lasting 3-10 days

Following is a description of our plan for a short-term cancellation of school, a situation that we hope not to encounter, of course. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we engage in a new way to share lessons remotely—and we appreciate the partnership of families and students as we navigate this new system. It's a learning opportunity for all of us—and after a cancellation ends, we will seek feedback about how we can improve our response.

In learning more about how best to “deliver school” in the event of a closure, we tried to think about the ways that this opens up opportunities as well. Asynchronous learning—materials that students can access on their own time, at their own pace—allows individual students time to let ideas develop, to compose responses and synthesize thinking, and to express themselves in new ways (ie. video responses). It avoids asking students to spend hours staring at a screen, and increases student agency in giving them some ownership over the ways in which they approach their work. We hope that students discover more about how they learn through the experience of learning in new ways—just as their teachers will teach in new and novel ways during any potential closure.

If school is cancelled, the first two days of the cancellation will be free days for students. This allows teachers time to prepare lessons and assignments if the school cancellation reaches a third day and beyond. It is important for students to bring classroom materials home each night, if instructed to do so by teachers, so that they have those available. Other materials will be distributed on-line.

Students in grades 6-12 will receive on-line work, resources, materials and instruction, with appropriate adjustments to reflect developmental differences.

For students in grades N-5, teachers will supply recommended work and play for children. This will be distributed either as a separate packet available in a “just in case” folder through backpacks, or via email to parents with assignments/activities attached.

Communication:

Once the community has been informed that the school will be closed, students will not be able to get into buildings on campus. An email with instructions will be sent to all families, including general directions. Teachers will share information by **9:00 AM on the third cancelled day**; the initial email will go to students and parents, indicating how further plans will be shared: Google, MyMB, or other means.

For each day that we are out, teachers will share, by 9:00 AM what the expectations are for that day; some teachers may do this by posting a longer term assignment with due dates that reflect the days of class meetings. For each class missed, the teacher will:

1. Share or post an assignment that can be accomplished at home and on one's own (reading, watching a videotaped lesson, researching, completing written work);
2. Indicate the timing of their virtual “office hours” and means of communication (email, phone, Google hang-out) for questions or class interaction; alternatively, if they are unable to create a workable office hour—recognizing that many will have home responsibilities as well—they will share how they will address questions within a 24-hour framework. In many cases, the students may not have questions, but we want to be sure students know when and how to contact teachers if they do.
3. Share expectations for submitting work. In some cases teachers may accept work electronically as students proceed; in others, work may be submitted when we return to school. This will be driven, in part, by how long the closure lasts. If a school cancellation extends more than 6 days, teachers will work with division heads and Debbie to ascertain best practices for responding to, assessing, and returning work.
4. If you are not able to get online or are having trouble accessing assignments, please contact the appropriate division head (omarti@mosesbrown.org, jschott@mosesbrown.org, elondon@mosesbrown.org) or Debbie Phipps (dhipps@mosesbrown.org).